



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

June 2004

Unemployment Rates Plummet in Northern Counties

The number of jobs added by employers in Northwest Wisconsin in May was the largest monthly increase in four years. Since February 3,900 jobs were added to the region's economy. Even though many of these jobs reflect seasonal hiring by local employers they bolster the economy and reduce local unemployment rates.

Unemployment rates declined in 66 of the state's 72 counties in May and many of the most notable re-

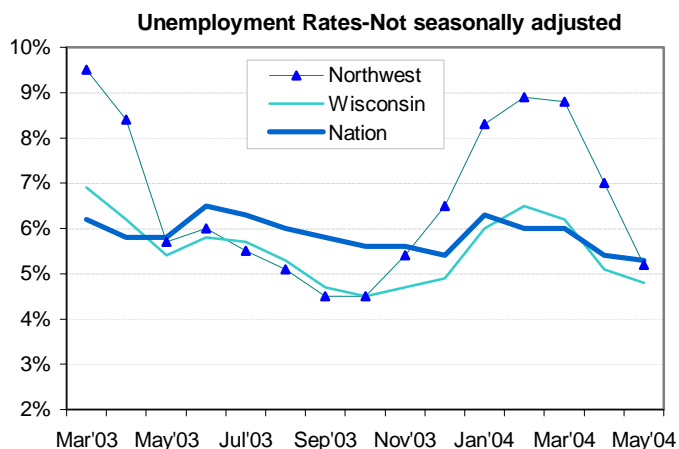
ductions occurred in the counties of Northwest Wisconsin. That includes the biggest drop in the state from 12.7 percent in April to 7.7 percent in May that occurred in Iron County.

As generally occurs in May the northern counties posted the greatest drops in unemployment rate as hordes of seasonal workers return to employers. The unemployment rate in May for the northwest region was 5.2 percent, down

considerably from 7.0 percent in April and lower than the 5.7 percent rate from one year earlier.

In May 2,520 residents found jobs and the number of employed in the region expanded to 91,260. The increase in employment was even greater than the reduction of 1,670 from the count of unemployed. That means that not only were unemployed residents returning jobs but many more job seekers entered the job market in May and immediately went to work. The labor force in the northwest now includes 96,300 residents, a record number of participants for the month.

The increase in jobs was broad-based with gains posted by every industry sector except government. Every county in the region reported an increase in jobs over last month. In Burnett and Washburn counties, however, those gains were not sufficient to surpass the job count from one year ago. Even though there are fewer local jobs the unemployment rate dropped in Burnett County from 4.5 percent last May to 4.3 percent this year because workers find jobs in



	Mar'03	Apr'03	May'03	Mar'04	Apr'04	May'04
Northwest	9.5%	8.4%	5.7%	8.8%	7.0%	5.2%
Wisconsin	6.9%	6.2%	5.4%	6.2%	5.1%	4.8%
Nation	6.2%	5.8%	5.8%	6.0%	5.4%	5.3%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: May 2004

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Labor force	8,506	8,281	8,364	7,740	7,660	7,534	8,131	8,007	8,080	23,774	23,613	23,500	3,343	3,330	3,333
Employed	7,942	7,583	7,709	7,307	6,978	7,094	7,785	7,562	7,720	22,613	22,289	22,281	3,087	2,908	3,036
Unemployed	564	698	655	433	682	440	346	445	360	1,161	1,324	1,219	256	422	297
% unemployed	6.6	8.4	7.8	5.6	8.9	5.8	4.3	5.6	4.5	4.9	5.6	5.2	7.7	12.7	8.9

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Labor force	7,154	7,252	7,080	7,135	7,280	6,915	10,753	10,327	10,330	11,273	11,277	11,162	8,488	8,423	8,486
Employed	6,819	6,779	6,673	6,661	6,664	6,525	10,240	9,608	9,786	10,727	10,511	10,515	8,079	7,859	8,022
Unemployed	335	473	407	474	616	390	513	719	544	546	766	647	409	564	464
% unemployed	4.7	6.5	5.7	6.6	8.5	5.6	4.8	7.0	5.3	4.8	6.8	5.8	4.8	6.7	5.5

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - May 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Total Nonfarm	8.8	8.5	8.8	4.0	3.7	3.9	5.2	5.0	5.2	18.4	17.9	18.1	2.3	2.1	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.1	3.1	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	2.4	2.3	2.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	3.0	2.9	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	3.1	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Total Nonfarm	6.6	6.5	6.5	5.8	5.8	5.8	7.2	6.7	7.0	9.3	9.1	9.2	6.3	6.1	6.4
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.5	0.4	0.5	2.9	2.8	2.9	1.0	0.9	1.1
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.7
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.4	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.5

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

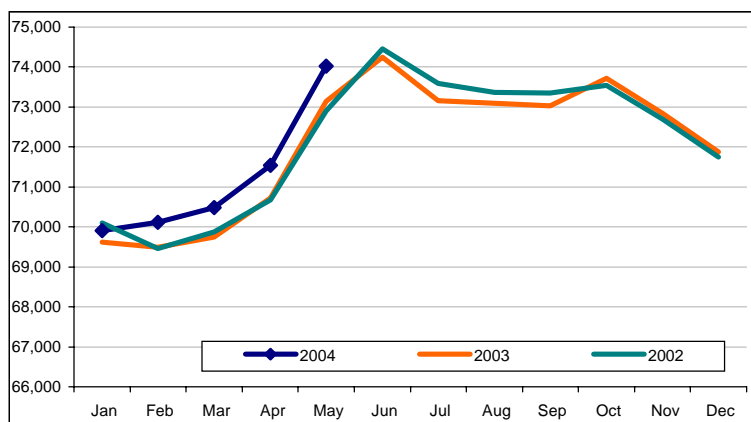
neighboring counties. The same is true in Washburn County where the rate declined from 5.5 percent a year ago to 4.8 percent in May.

In the combined ten-county region, there were 74,000 jobs in May, 2,475 more than in the previous month and 880 more than one year ago. The largest increase from April occurred with leisure and hospitality employers with the addition of 910 jobs. Every county in the region posted an increase in leisure and hospitality jobs as employers prepared for summer tourists. Employers in trade were also hiring workers in anticipation of summer and added 250 jobs in May. Even though that increase is shy of the previous two years there are more trade jobs in the region, 10,800, than in 2003.

Construction employers in every county added workers to net the second largest increase in May with the addition of 775 jobs throughout the region.



Total Nonfarm Employment in Northwest



Manufacturers recovered from the slip in April and added 240 jobs in May. Manufacturing jobs remain weak in this recovery with total employment hovering around 12,000, down nearly 300 from one year ago and 850 less than in 2002.

As the number of jobs increases the number of residents filing claims for unemployment compensation benefits

declines. In mid-June, 2,001 residents filed a claim for benefits compared with 2,423 claims filed one year earlier. The number of claims in June is also down from the 2,231 filed in mid-May and is approaching the levels of 2001.

Find the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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